



**HELPING HANDS:** Deborah Groves, top left, is happiest helping the Cambodian people, particularly the local children of Prasat Char village, above.

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** A "full bellies" breakfast program, left, is improving the health of the children; 300 attend the new school, above left, where they are taught English and families can work to earn a bicycle.

"There was one tourist who bought some of my photos and then when they got back home, they sent me a \$500 donation which goes a very long way here. It costs us \$5 for a consultation as part of the eye treatment program."

As well as large-scale projects, Helping Hands has helped to set up a number of villagers in their own small business, supported families with sick relatives, paid for surgery for a burns victim and funeral costs for another villager

as well as setting up a seed bank to allow all villagers to have access to vegetable seeds.

In a country besieged by poverty, frequently inept government and still wavering under the shadow of thousands of unmapped landmines scattered through the countryside, it can be dangerous.

"It is very different to the lifestyle we have here," Deborah said during a recent visit with family on the Coast. "You have to be sensible because stuff does happen but as a westerner you are less

likely to be robbed at gunpoint because they know if they are caught the punishment will be much worse.

"And because of the landmines you do have to be careful where you walk. There are still people in Cambodia being blown up by the landmines."

But Deborah is not one to focus on the negatives, instead steering the conversation back to the positive work being done in Prasat Char.

In the last 12 months Helping

Hands has increased its staff from just Deborah and a villager Chanti, who has become her invaluable offsider, to now include four staff at the school, two staff in a shop selling the photos to tourists and an American volunteer.

And there are plenty more plans to expand the work done by the organisation with stated aims which include finding more ways for villagers to earn an income including making crafts to sell, having all children in the village attend school and educate the

adults on issues from health to agricultural practices.

"In other words our aim is to get them to become more self-reliant and look after themselves instead of being recipients of charity," Deborah said.

For more details on the Helping Hands organisation check out [www.grovesphotography.com](http://www.grovesphotography.com).

Donations can be made at the St George Bank: The details are: account name: Helping Hands Cambodia; account number: 419 526 714; BSB: 114 879.

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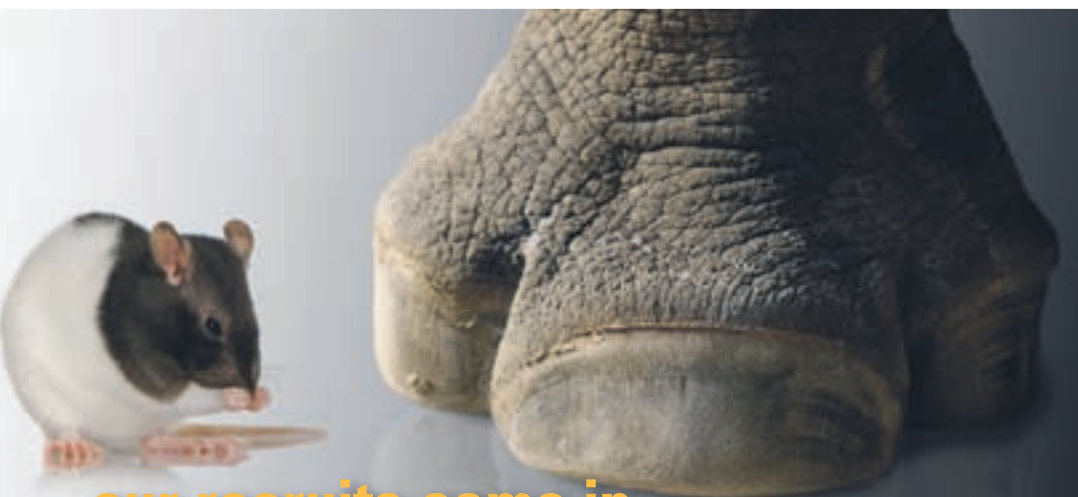
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